Resolution on threats to stability, security and democracy in Western and Sahelian Africa

2022/2650(RSP) - 05/05/2022 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on threats to stability, security and democracy in Western and Sahelian Africa.

The text adopted in plenary was tabled by the EPP, S&D, Renew, ECR groups and Members.

The Sahel and West Africa play a crucial role for the security and stability of the entire African continent. The security situation in those regions has deteriorated sharply in recent years, presenting a threat to regional and international stability. Violence in the Sahel has been increasing ever since the **downfall of the Gaddafi regime** in Libya in 2011, and as a result, is one of the regions most affected by the proliferation of illicit small arms.

Moreover, the compounding threats of poverty, lack of access to basic social services, climate change, terrorist armed groups, rising inter-community violence over land and resources, food insecurity, displacement of people, and gender-based violence have resulted in a complex context of instability and insecurity.

Despite the numerous peacekeeping efforts by the Sahel countries and the international community, the situation in the region remains very volatile with terrorist groups, including Islamist terrorists affiliated with ISIS such as Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), increasing their presence in the region. This has resulted in more than 7.7 million people being forcibly displaced across seven countries in the Sahel.

Parliament strongly condemned the violence and loss of life in West Africa and the Sahelian region, including abuses committed in the context of military operations, and expressed concern over the increased instability in the Sahel, which undermines the security and stability of the countries concerned and which has profound regional and international consequences. It recognised that the security situation in the Sahel continues to be an enormous challenge and that many civilians are suffering from a lack of security and have become the victims of terrorist attacks.

The resolution reiterated that any long-term security and political cooperation with EU actors will require realistic timetables for a return to democracy, including clear and measurable milestones. It recalled that genuine democratic transition and reform must be civilian-led and allow for the full and active involvement of civil society organisations, women, young people and opposition parties.

Parliament called for:

- the EU and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) countries to increase the coordination of security, development, humanitarian and democracy-support assistance to ensure an integrated approach to peace and security for lasting sustainable development across the region;

- the full operationalisation of the G5 Sahel and for EU Member States to cooperate closely with it in this regard, through financial capacity building, the exchange of military equipment and the provision of efficient training in military and civilian operations;

- the EU to tailor its investments and development cooperation to tackling the root causes of terrorism and insecurity;

- an increase in their financial support and humanitarian aid to meet the urgent needs of the affected populations;

- the EU and its Member States to harness anti-corruption policy through enhanced capacity building.

The resolution stressed that despite the persisting security challenges, progress has been made in combating armed Islamist groups. It condemned the increasing presence of the Kremlin-backed Russian Wagner Group in the Sahel. Members called on all countries that are cooperating or considering cooperating with the Wagner Group to take into account the developments in Ukraine, where the Russian regime is conducting a brutal and inhumane war in blatant violation of international law.